

1859

Montreal. Harbour.

Report of the committee of
citizens upon harbour improve-
ments.



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REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE OF CITIZENS
UPON
Harbour Improvements,
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DOCK ACCOMMODATION.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF J. C. BECKET, 33 GREAT SAINT JAMES STREET.

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REPORT.

FELLOW CITIZENS,—You are aware of the divided state of public opinion and of the excitement, caused by conflicting interests, which prevailed up to a very recent period in this city, with reference to the means to be adopted for providing additional Harbour or Dock accommodation for vessels of large capacity at Montreal.

In view of the discordant state of the public mind upon this subject, a meeting of citizens was convened by the Harbour Commissioners on 24th. May last, at the Office of the Harbour Trust.

At this meeting, representatives of the different sections, advocating various schemes for improving the present Harbour, or for constructing Docks, attended,—and after a protracted discussion adopted a resolution which was concurred in by the Harbour Commissioners, to the following effect:—

Resolved,—That the following Committee, viz., Wm. Workman, John Redpath, Henry Bulmer, Wm. Parkyn, John Ostell, A. M. Delisle, and Thomas Ryan, be empowered to select an engineer to survey and take the levels of the ground lying between the present Harbour and the north bank of the Lachine Canal and St. Joseph Street, or such part thereof as such Committee may determine on, in order that such levels may be laid as soon as possible before a chief engineer or engineers of eminence, to be named by said Committee and approved of by the Harbour Commissioners, which engineer or engineers shall ascertain the facilities afforded on the north or city side of the Lachine Canal for the construction

“ of Docks and Warehouses, and the expense thereof, and
 “ shall also confer with the Harbour Commissioners, and
 “ said Committee, as to the extent to which the present
 “ Harbour can be improved, and the expense thereof, and
 “ shall report upon the whole subject.”

In pursuance of the objects of this resolution, your Committee met and was organized on the 25th May last, and appointed Mr. P. M'Questin to plot and level the ground designated in the foregoing resolution. They also instituted enquiries as to the best mode of obtaining, and as to the probable cost of certain lands, which might be found eligible for the construction of Docks within the area referred to.

Their next step was to seek a conference with the Harbour Commissioners, for the purpose of discussing the best mode of improving the present Harbour, so as to give increased accommodation for vessels with a draught of 20 feet, in that part of it which extends from the Island Wharf, eastward, to the Victoria Pier. Mr. Forsyth, Civil Engineer to the Harbour Commissioners, was accordingly instructed by them to estimate, in concert with Mr. M'Questin, the cost of wharfing and dredging to 20 feet, within the space above described.

Consequent, on this arrangement, several estimates and plans were prepared and examined by the Harbour Commissioners, and by your Committee, all tending to establish the important fact, that very extensive accommodation, for vessels drawing 20 feet water, was obtainable in the present Harbour, in front of the centre of the city—where wholesale business chiefly is now carried on.

At this stage of their labours, your Committee were deprived of the able assistance of one of their number, Mr. A. M. Delisle, whose sense of duty to a large portion of the community, in concert with whom he had hitherto acted, induced him to withdraw from the Committee.

About the same period a lengthened correspondence,

involving questions of considerable importance in reference to the subject under discussion, took place between your Committee and the Harbour Commissioners; but, the whole of this having appeared in the public journals, any further reference to it is unnecessary.

While thus engaged your Committee did not, however, lose sight of the chief duty assigned to them under the resolution of the 24th May, namely, the selection of a chief engineer of eminence, to examine into and report upon the whole question of Harbour improvement and Docks.

After many particular enquiries, in quarters most likely to furnish names from which to make a selection, your Committee made choice of John C. Trautwine, Esq., C. E., of Philadelphia, and their selection having been approved by the Harbour Commissioners, Mr. Trautwine accepted the nomination, and entered upon his duties upon the 17th of July last, under the following joint instructions from the Harbour Commissioners and your Committee :—

LETTER

Of Instructions, signed respectively by the Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners and the Chairman of a Committee of Citizens on Harbour improvement, handed to Mr. TRAUTWINE, on his undertaking the duty of examining into and reporting upon Dock and Harbour accommodation.

MONTREAL, 15th July, 1858.

JOHN C. TRAUTWINE, Esq.,
Civil Engineer.

SIR,—

We have the honor to convey to you the views which the Harbour Commissioners, acting in concert with a Committee of Citizens, have adopted as a guide for you in the investigations which you have undertaken to make

on the subject of Harbour improvement and of Dock accommodation in this city.

It may be well to inform you that the citizens have been much divided in opinion upon these questions—especially upon that of Docks ; and that two projects have been very prominently before the public—the one favoring Hochelaga Bay and the other Point St. Charles, as a site for Docks.

On the subject of improving and extending the present Harbour, a general desire seems prevalent to accomplish that object, and any difference of opinion which now exists on that point is simply as to the plan to be adopted, and the cost which it may be prudent to incur. On the subject of Docks, in the course of the discussions which have taken place, a third project was started, indicating a site on the city side of the Lachine Canal, which was considered more easy of access for the business of the city than either Hochelaga Bay or Point St. Charles.

As this site seemed likely to unite conflicting opinions, and found favor to a great extent among the citizens, the Harbour Commissioners invited the proposers of it to a conference, at which several of the citizens were present, and at which the following resolution was agreed to:—"That the following Committee, viz , Wm. Workman, John Redpath, Henry Bulmer, Wm. Parkyn, John Ostell, A. M. Delisle, and Thomas Ryan, be empowered to select an engineer to survey and take the levels of the ground lying between the present Harbour and the north bank of the Lachine Canal and St. Joseph Street, or such part thereof as the Committee may determine on, in order that such levels may be laid by them as soon as possible before a chief engineer or engineers, to be named by said Committee and approved of by the Harbour Commissioners, which engineer or engineers shall ascertain what facilities are afforded on the north or city side of the Lachine Canal for the construction of Docks and Warehouses, and the expense thereof, and shall also confer with the Harbour

“Commissioners, and the said Committee, as to the extent
 “to which the present Harbour can be improved, and the
 “expense thereof, and shall report upon the whole subject.”

In pursuance of this resolution, your name was suggested by the Committee, and was approved of by the Harbour Commissioners and you will accordingly undertake the duties prescribed in the resolution.

These, you will perceive, are twofold :—

1st, To examine and report upon the site which for convenience we will call the “Central” site for Docks.

2d, To confer with the Harbour Commissioners and the Committee, and report on the subject of Harbour improvement.

Commencing with the question of Harbour improvement, we beg to hand you sundry reports, plans, estimates, soundings, &c., &c., enumerated in the Appendix attached to this letter. Amongst these you will find a plan marked No. 1, E, and an estimate marked No. 1, F, prepared by Mr. M’Questin on the information derived from the engineer of the Harbour Trust, and the data furnished him by the kindness of the Harbour Commissioners.

After perusal of these papers, maps, &c., and a personal examination of the Harbour, we have to request your opinion as to the manner in which you consider it can best be extended and improved, keeping in view the cost, and the actual as well as prospective requirements of the trade of this port.

Coming to the question of Dock accommodation, the Committee, in order to facilitate your operations, have employed Mr. M’Questin to survey and plot the ground indicated in the foregoing resolution, and to take the levels, which have been checked by Mr. Forsyth, engineer of the Harbour Trust; and we hand you Mr. M’Questin’s plan, marked No. 1. G, which comprises the area to which your

special investigations will be directed, and the services of Mr. M'Questin and Mr. Forsyth are at your disposal for any explanations or further details you may require from them.

On this plan, and in connexion with Lachine Canal, you will notice a large extent of land about 28 acres, the property of Government.

If, as it is hoped by the Committee, the Government may be induced to make the proposed Docks a portion of the public works in that vicinity, the cost of construction in that case would not become chargeable on the Harbour, but would be more generally distributed over the general commerce of the country, than if undertaken as a local work.

Two modes of approach for sea-going vessels to the site in question are exhibited on the plan—one through the property of the Grey Nunnery and of the Seminary of Montreal; the other by means of a new lock of increased dimensions connecting the Harbour with the present Canal Basins. But you are requested not to confine your examinations to these approaches alone should any other more eligible occur to you.

The cost of the land by the Grey Nunnery approach will present an item for your serious consideration, independent of any question of engineering; and on this point of cost full information will be obtained for you.

The important object aimed at by constructing Docks and affording increased Harbour accommodation for large vessels, is to attract to the St. Lawrence route a greater share of the trade of the West than has hitherto passed through that channel; and the facilities to be obtained must be such as will enable lake and sea-going vessels to meet and exchange cargoes with expedition and economy, and such as will also afford sufficient berth room in the Harbour for ocean steamers of the largest capacity and draught, now running to this port.

It will be your duty to examine and report upon the facilities to be afforded within the limits of the accompanying plan and its vicinity, for the construction of Docks upon such a scale as you may deem requisite to ensure the objects already alluded to ; bearing in mind that your estimates of the cost must exercise a material influence on the policy to be pursued in the selection of a site for Docks.

In the Appendix you will find included, the reports, plans, &c., &c., of the other sites which have been proposed for Docks, upon which you will make such observations as you may deem necessary or applicable in regard to their comparative merits, and finally, after consideration of the whole subject, give your opinion in writing as to the best course to be pursued for providing Docks and Harbour accommodation.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

JOHN YOUNG,
Chairman Harbour Commissioners.

THOMAS RYAN,
Chairman of Committee.

In accordance with these instructions, Mr. Trautwine applied himself indefatigably, for a period of several weeks, to a thorough personal examination and investigation of the subject submitted to him—prosecuting his enquiries in the most zealous and energetic manner ; and, finally, submitted the result of his deliberations in the two reports that have been already published.

No. 1, On the improvement of the present Harbour, with estimates and plans.

No. 2, On the question of Docks, with comparative estimates, shewing the cost and capacity of the various schemes which have been advanced.

In the former of these reports it is highly satisfactory to

find a full confirmation of views long entertained by many of our citizens, that that portion of the Harbour immediately opposite the actual business centre of the city, hitherto occupied by wood barges and other small craft, is susceptible of being deepened and improved to an extent that will, without any very serious outlay, largely increase the accommodation for sea-going vessels.

The Harbour Commissioners do not appear to have attached sufficient importance to the suggestions which have, at various times, been made on this subject—their reports, which have appeared at different periods, containing no prominent allusion thereto.

If this Committee have been instrumental in eliciting this fact, and bringing it before the public, with the support of Mr. Trautwine's professional authority, in a manner to ensure its execution to a certain extent, they will not have labored without some good result.

Passing now to Mr. Trautwine's Report upon Docks, with his accompanying plans and estimates, the Committee bear testimony to the able and lucid manner in which that gentleman has dealt with this highly important branch of his enquiries. Coming amongst us with no interest to serve, nor any shade of opinion to please,—his deliberations appear to have been influenced only by an impartial and unbiassed consideration of the subjects he had to deal with. In the discharge of such a mission it was hopeless to expect that he would satisfy all parties—either as to the abstract necessity of constructing Docks, or, that point being decided, the best site for their location.

The Committee, however, are not prepared to concur in all of Mr. Trautwine's views respecting the future trade of this country.

The Committee believe that there is no good ground to apprehend that any combination of adverse interests will succeed in carrying past Montreal the general trade of the

country. The natural advantages of this city at the head of ship navigation—and the terminus of the Provincial Canals—will, undoubtedly, at least maintain it in its present pre-eminence, relatively to the other cities of Canada, should no unnecessary obstacles or burthens be placed upon its trade to destroy the benefits accruing from its position.

Your Committee have duly considered various reports, opinions, arguments and statistics, which have been advanced to prove the superiority of the St. Lawrence route over others, and are of opinion that this route does possess advantages over other lines for the transport of the produce of the west to the ocean, and have no doubt that suitable Dock accommodation would facilitate and foster that trade ; but, as this city would merely be a sharer in the advantages which would thus result to the whole Province, the Committee do not see why Docks for the purposes referred to—and they are not at present required for any other—should be constructed as a local work ; such a project must be regarded as of provincial importance in common with all the other great improvements of our inland navigation. It would be not only unwise but unjust to burthen the trade of this city with the large outlay required to carry out a project of this kind. The dues which would necessarily have to be levied upon vessels and cargoes entering this port would, in the opinion of your Committee, prove disastrous to its interests. Your Committee, therefore, consider that the construction of Docks cannot at present be correctly viewed otherwise than as a completion of the Provincial Canals, and that consequently any such works should be undertaken by the Government.

To form any correct idea of the *extent* of Dock accommodation, which it would be desirable under present circumstances to endeavour to obtain, we must consider what prospect we have of materially increasing the tonnage visiting this port. The Committee have already expressed their belief that the St. Lawrence can compete successfully with other routes

from the interior to the different sea-ports, but we cannot ship our produce hence unless we have vessels to carry it, and we cannot expect vessels to come here unless we can give them cargoes inward as well as outward.

So long as the present commercial and revenue policy of the United States exists—exacting duties at Canadian prices upon all merchandize purchased here—Canada will be unable to attract western buyers to any great extent; and it is, therefore, out of our power to furnish any considerable amount of return freight to the west, such as vessels and railways carrying produce from the west to the United States shipping ports readily obtain.

The same cause will have the effect of limiting our sea-going vessels to an extent of tonnage about commensurate with the requirements of our own domestic consumption, our emigration arrivals, and such direct shipments of ocean freights to western United States ports, as may occasionally be induced to take the St. Lawrence route.

Beyond this tonnage there is little reason to suppose that our ocean shipments can extend, even were we possessed of Docks with every possible facility for receiving and discharging cargoes. Vessels will not come here in ballast if they can obtain cargoes for ports in the United States, unless they could secure a rate of freight which would much more than outweigh the advantages of our inland transport. The Committee, therefore, think that arguments apparently very cogent, based upon elaborate statistics, shewing the amount of trade which might, under certain circumstances, be brought down the St. Lawrence, are utterly fallacious, and if followed out would result in disappointment.

It is the domestic supply trade which chiefly furnishes the return freight to the west, and it is this trade which will certainly carry with it the largest proportion of the direct Atlantic import trade.

The commerce of Canada has hitherto steadily increased,

and there is no reason to doubt that, notwithstanding temporary depressions, it will continue to grow. A commercial policy which would encourage foreign importations by the St. Lawrence would be the most effectual mode of promoting our western trade, and of increasing the revenue derived from the St. Lawrence canals, a matter of very great importance to our Government.

Having faith in the continued prosperity of Canada, your Committee are of opinion that increased accommodation for ships in the neighbourhood of the Lachine Canal will, ere long, be required.

The Committee believe that the project of Docks submitted by Mr. Trautwine is preferable in its general features to any of the rival schemes hitherto proposed. Besides, being nearer the business portion of the city, it is believed that, if the ground required be immediately secured, it would be found much less expensive in construction,—and it offers this great advantage, viz., that it may be carried on in progressive sections, as the requirements of commerce may demand, and thus the outlay need not be incurred before there is a fair probability of a return.

In conclusion, the Committee are of opinion :—

1st. That the Provincial Government should be urged seriously to consider this question, and to secure without delay all the ground that is likely to be required for additional ship accommodation in the neighbourhood of the Lachine Canal, and not to dispose of any of the public property, nor allow any alterations to be made in the present arrangements connected with the Canal Basins, until the question of Docks is finally determined.

2nd. That such improvements in the present Harbour as will combine at least all of the advantages of those suggested by Mr. Trautwine, should be carried out as soon as circumstances will permit. These improvements, with the aid of floating elevators, will enable transhipments to be made with great facility and economy, and would

be still farther augmented by a connection of the Grand Trunk Railway with the Harbour, a project which appears as desirable in the interests of the Company as it would prove advantageous to the city.

3rd. That the citizens should not cease to urge strenuously upon the Government the injustice of continuing to burthen the trade of this city with the heavy debt incurred in deepening Lake St. Peter, a work strictly Provincial in its character.

4th. That every possible effort should be made by the Government to foster and encourage immigration from Europe to the west through the St. Lawrence.

And finally, that the citizens should continue to give their earnest attention to the question of Harbour accommodation—the proper determination of which must have the most important results on the commercial prosperity of Montreal.

Your Committee avail themselves of this opportunity to acknowledge the courtesy and kindness of the Harbour Commissioners, in all their intercourse with that body, they having willingly placed the valuable maps and documents in possession of that commission at the service of the Committee, and thus saved considerable time and expense.

THOMAS RYAN, *Chairman*,
 WILLIAM WORKMAN,
 JOHN REDPATH,
 HENRY BULMER,
 WILLIAM PARKYN,
 JOHN OSTELL.

LETTER

Received from J. C. TRAUTWINE, Esq., in reply to some portions of the remarks of the HON. J. YOUNG, in his review of the Harbour and Dock question.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE OF CITIZENS, ON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS.

Philadelphia, 16th Jan., 1858.

GENTLEMEN,

I am indebted to a friend in Montreal for a copy of a pamphlet, recently issued by the Hon. John Young, and entitled, "Rival Routes to the Ocean from the West; and Docks at Montreal" One object, if not the principal one, in the preparation of this document, appears to have been the controverting of certain views expressed by myself in my recent report on Harbour and Dock improvements at Montreal. The prevailing sentiment with which I have perused Mr. Young's pamphlet is one of regret, that he should have undertaken it while suffering, as he has for some time past, under a distressing malady, peculiarly calculated to unfit a person for the exercise of that cool judgment and mental application which should be brought to bear upon such a task. This consideration alone can palliate many of the statements contained in the pamphlet; and which, under any other ascription of their origin, would be but illy calculated to enhance Mr. Young's reputation as a dispassionate, and impartial reasoner. But while I sincerely deplore the course which I believe has given rise to them, I feel it incumbent upon me, from a sense of duty both to the citizens of Montreal and to myself, to reply briefly to a few of the many indirect personal allusions to me, made in a manner by no means flattering, and which, although evincing an exceedingly questionable taste, have a tendency to abase me in the estimation of any reader who should hastily accept them as legitimate deductions from the tenor of my report. On the very first page, we are told, that "the improvement of the Island Wharf has been under consideration of the Harbour Commissioners for some time, and has been resolved on, and the mode of construction pointed out by Mr. Forsyth previous to Mr. Trautwine's arrival in Montreal." Now, to a casual reader, it would appear from this, as doubtless was Mr. Young's intention, that the plan *which I recommended* for that particular improvement, and the object for which I desired its early accomplishment, namely, the procurement of more deep water wharfage, had been under consideration, and decided on before my arrival. If such was the case, I can only say, that it was not so stated in the official documents laid before me by the Commissioners as indicative of their intentions respecting Harbour improvements,—nor was it ever intimated to me either by them or any other person. It did not even suggest itself to me until after my return from Montreal. On the contrary, I was given to understand *most emphatically* from all sources, that the Commissioners contemplated *no farther deep water accommodation above Victoria Pier*; and that their intentions to the contrary had become so palpable as to have been one of the principal motives for calling upon me for advice on the subject. On this point there can, I believe, be no doubt in the mind of a single citizen of Montreal; but if there should, I refer them to the

official printed assertion of Mr. Young himself, that the very kind of improvement which I recommended, and which I still strongly recommend, was too expensive to be entertained, and constituted a strong argument in favor of going below Victoria Pier. How are we to reconcile statements so discordant, and yet emanating from the same source? In the very next paragraph, Mr. Young takes exceptions to two other improvements suggested in my report; but, inasmuch as he has not stated the grounds on which his objections are based, I can form no opinion as to their validity. My advice, not to enter upon any scheme of Docks *at this time*, appears to constitute another objectionable feature in my report, in Mr. Young's estimation. It is alluded to more than once. On page 61, Mr. Young says, "If we adopt Mr. Trautwine's policy, and wait till trade increases, without attempting to make our position more attractive for trade than it is, I fear we shall have to wait a long time," &c. To this, I have merely, to observe, that it would have been difficult to condense into so short a sentence, words conveying a more erroneous idea of my views respecting the commerce of Montreal; or, of the general purport of my report. I have not only not advised to wait any longer, but have urged that no cause should prevent the immediate adaptation of the port of Montreal to the increase of trade, which has already attended the opening of a ship channel to her very doors; and which is, beyond all question, destined to experience a rapid augmentation. But what does Mr. Young think, and say, on this very important point? Does he entertain as well grounded expectations and hopes for the future prosperity of Montreal as I do? I think not; for, on page 53, he says, "It will be seen from my previous remarks, that *it is through and by this Caughnawaga project ALONE, that I expect the trade of Montreal to increase.* Now, I leave it for Mr. Young himself, basing his reply upon his own argument, to say whether the construction of the Caughnawaga Canal is involved in so little uncertainty as to justify the citizens of Montreal in entering upon an "*expensive system of Docks at this time*," in anticipation of it; or whether it would not be more advisable to wait, as I have advised, "until future developments of commerce bring about a posture of affairs different from that which now exists; and one which shall change the unpropitious aspect which the project now wears." Mr. Young's remarks respecting my plan and estimates for Docks, are dictated in the same view as the other portions of his pamphlet; they abound in inconsistencies. There is something exceedingly unfair in such imputations as this, "Mr. Trautwine estimates for 11 piers," (in the Point St. Charles project) "4 only are necessary at present." Now, any one who will take the trouble to refer to my report, will see that I not only estimated for 11 piers, (which was the number shown in the plan sanctioned by Mr. Young,) but also on the supposition that they *all* should be dispensed with for the present. Again, I am accused of introducing the cost of "graving Docks" into my estimate for the Point St. Charles project, and omitting it in the others; when, in fact, the most direct reference is made to the effect on the estimates incident upon the adoption or rejection of graving Docks in all the projects. It is *especially* alluded to in my estimate for the Point St. Charles project. It is really almost a waste of time to reply to such allegations; and I will, therefore, not trespass much longer on the patience of the reader. One or two more points, and I shall

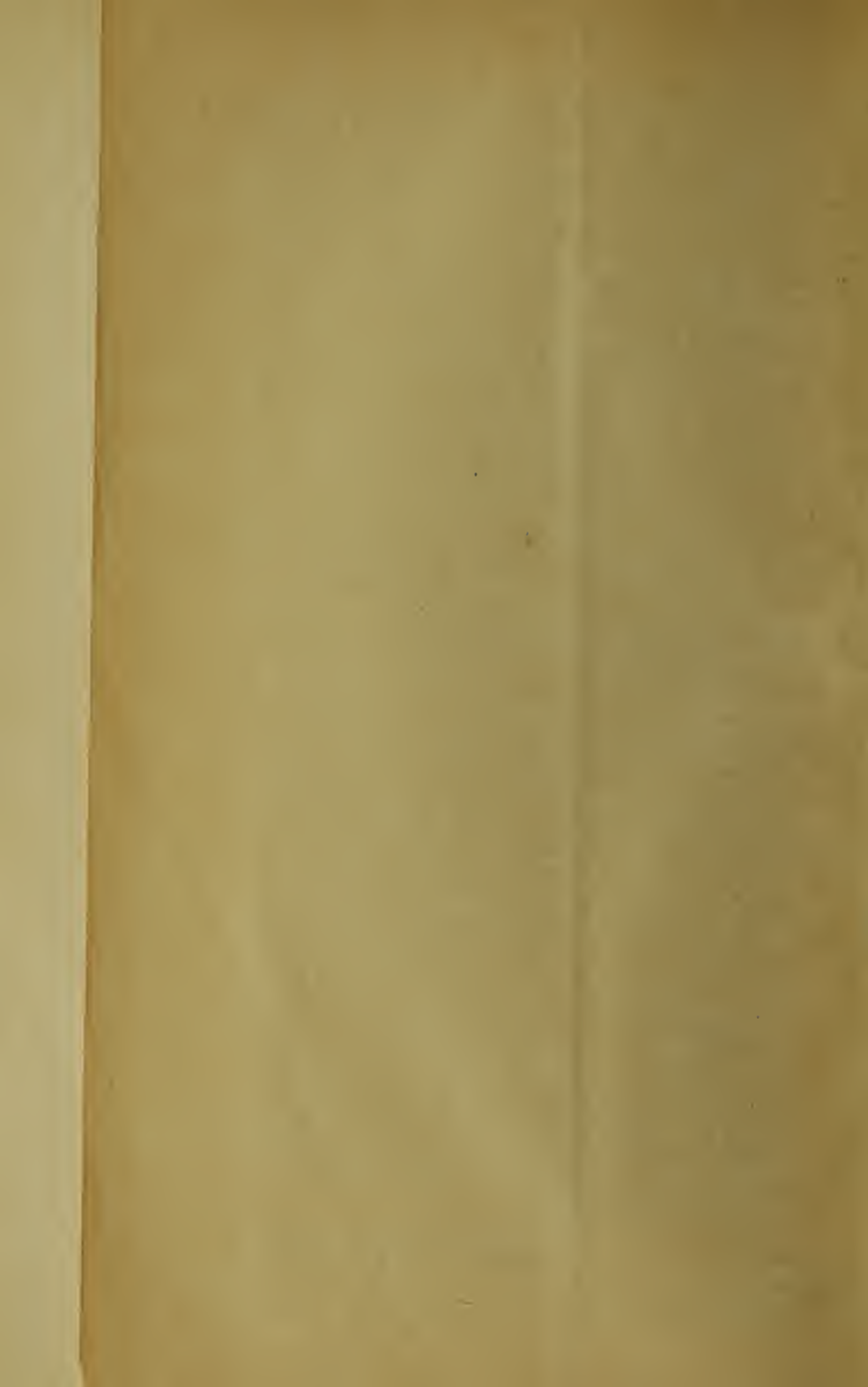
conclude. Mr. Young wishes to know why I did not include the cost of the Grand Trunk property, when I showed that my plan admitted of extension through it. Mr. Young is probably the only man in Montreal to whom the question would have suggested itself. *My project gives nearly two miles more wharfage than the Point St. Charles one does, without tresspassing upon the Grand Trunk property at all.* Ages would elapse, and commercial miracles be performed, before even the most visionary dreamer could predict a necessity for occupying any of that property for Docks. The extension upon it was shown in my plan, merely as confirmatory of my assertion, that my project admitted of almost indefinite extension. Should the Grand Trunk Company, however, desire Dock accommodation on their own property, we have, on page 59, an expression of *Mr. Young's own opinion, that they may be induced to contribute some \$800,000 towards its construction.* Perhaps they would contribute a portion of this in land. The question may possibly be referred to Mr. Blackwell's successor many centuries hence. As to my omitting an estimate of the value of such of the *Provincial* property as my project requires, the suggestion is more ingenious, than ingenuous. My reason for omitting it is stated in my report; and I can only presume, that Mr. Young did not himself quote it, because it is conclusive of the propriety of my doing so. The remarks about my "mills without water;" the excess of my estimate of cost for a 20 feet Lock for the Point St. Charles project, over the 25 feet one in my own, &c., &c., &c., compel me to the conclusion that the pamphlet was not intended for the meridian of Montreal, where the facts of the case are too well known to allow of its producing its intended effect. I trust that any person who feels an interest in knowing the contents of my report, will take the trouble to read it, and compare it with Mr. Young's pamphlet. I understand that it is to be printed in pamphlet form, with the accompanying plans, and I can only hope that it may be circulated as freely as were the strictures upon it. In it, I have aimed at two leading points which embrace the entire subject: namely, to show that it is inexpedient to build any system of Docks *at present*; and that, should the time arrive when Docks shall be considered imperatively necessary to the commercial prosperity of Montreal, or of Canada at large, then the plan recommended by myself should be preferred to the Point St. Charles project, because it is much more commodious, accessible, secure, and cheap. I still entertain the same opinion; and so far is Mr. Young's pamphlet from having the slightest tendency to invalidate either assumption, that it can only be regarded as strongly confirmative of both; so much so as to leave me entirely at a loss to assign any motive for its publication. Even admitting that all my views on the subject of commerce are, as Mr. Young intimates, incorrect; and adopting his opinion that the future increase of Montreal is dependent solely on the future construction of the Caughnawaga Canal, as perfectly sound, I still do not see in what manner the admission can serve to controvert either point for which I contend.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN C. TRAUTWINE.

THOMAS RYAN,
Chairman of Committee, &c., &c.



JAN. 6/31

